

No more Stephen Drew talk: Boston Red Sox believe Xander Bogaerts is bound for greatness



Xander Bogaerts is just 21, but the Red Sox have good reason to believe he's due for greatness. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

Jason Mastrodonato, MassLive.com By **Jason Mastrodonato, MassLive.com**

Follow on Twitter

on January 22, 2014 at 3:30 AM, updated January 22, 2014 at 10:19 AM

BOSTON – Stephen Drew. Stephen Drew. Stephen Drew.

Are the Boston Red Sox going to bring him back? Question of the offseason.

Not even the Red Sox know the answer. Actually, they're sick of talking about him.

General manager Ben Cherington said just as much at the Hot Stove Cool Music Baseball Roundtable on Tuesday night, right before he went on stage to be part of a panel that engaged in a lively discussion about baseball culture. After answering three Drew-related questions from reporters before the roundtable began, Cherington got a fourth.

The always-respectful general manager answered the question in one sentence, then decided he was tired of talking about Stephen Drew.

"Look," Cherington said, "I'd really rather just keep it to, 'We have a lot of respect for him and we respect his decision and the factors that he's considering.'"

"We have issues of our own. We're mostly focused on those issues. We're mostly focused on what we feel is right for us and what is best, because there's a mutual respect with him, with (agent Scott Boras).

"Of course, if it makes sense to talk, we'll talk. But I think the time that's being spent on it being talked about publicly is not necessarily consistent with the time we're spending on it."

Cherington, who has been open in the past when asked how often he speaks with Boras, respectfully declined to talk about that, too.

"I don't want to get into marking on the calendar every time we talk to an agent," Cherington said. Manager John Farrell said he'd be ready and happy to welcome Drew to camp if he ends up signing with the Red Sox. And if he doesn't, it'll officially be time for the new Red Sox shortstop, Xander Bogaerts.

Drew might not have been a popular conversation topic on Tuesday night, but Bogaerts sure was.

"Every report, every person that's seen Xander play is comfortable with his ability to play shortstop," Farrell gushed. "Even though he's got just a handful of at-bats at the big-league level, there's going to be some challenges along the way that he'll grow through, and we're fully aware of that and accepting of it."

Farrell, Cherington and Cherington's staff of assistant general manger, Mike Hazen, and director of player development, Ben Crockett, all talked about Bogaerts during the Roundtable discussion. They talked about the scouting and research that went into finding a 16-year-old in Aruba and being so certain that he was going to be a superstar. They were all sure of it. They still are.

They don't just have faith in "Xander Bogaerts, the player," who hit .326 as a 19-year-old in Double-A in 2012, then .292 during the major league postseason in 2013. They also have faith in "Xander Bogaerts, the person," who laughs and smiles and shows less anxiety than Bob Marley.

When it became Farrell's turn to answer a question about how difficult it is to trust a young player enough to play him on a World Series team, Farrell literally laughed out loud. It's not hard with Xander Bogaerts, he said. This is a special 21-year-old.

Xander Bogaerts. Xander Bogaerts. Xander Bogaerts.

That's who the Red Sox wanted to talk about on Tuesday night.

© 2014 masslive.com. All rights reserved.

Source: http://www.masslive.com/redsox/index.ssf/2014/01/stephen_drew_talk_overblown_gm.html